



## Perris News

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### Perris Hires New Planning Manager

Clara Miramontes was introduced Tuesday as the new Planning Manager for the City of Perris.

Miramontes, who was hired from the City of Riverside where she served as principal planner for the Community Development Department, replaces Brad Eckhardt, who was tragically killed in a traffic accident in July.

City Manager Richard Belmudez formally introduced her at the start of Tuesday's Perris City Council meeting.

"I am very happy to be here," said Miramontes, who has 14 years as a planner and planning manager. "There is a tremendous amount of activity taking place in the City of Perris. It's no secret many great things are happening. I look forward to working with this cutting-edge team."

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch spoke from the dais, welcoming Miramontes to the City.

"I think you'll find you've made a wise choice," he said.

Miramontes started Monday and has spent her first week meeting staff and getting acquainted with City Council members and administrators.

It's been hectic, she said.

Miramontes said she was attracted to Perris because of the City's dynamism, even during a tough economy.

In recent months, Perris has broken ground on a new Interstate 215/Highway 74 interchange, the Mercado Apartments and Mercado Park in Downtown and the Big League Dreams sports complex. The City is restoring its art deco Perris Theatre and attracting businesses like Rio Ranch Market and a Wyndham hotel.

"People in the Inland Area are definitely starting to notice Perris," Miramontes said.

Perris also is celebrating its 100th birthday in 2011 and Miramontes said she commends the City Council and staff for its commitment to preserving the past—including the Bank of Perris, the Southern Hotel and the Perris Depot.

"Historic buildings are important because of the people who lived and worked there," she said. "They are tied to the founding folks. If you lose sight of that, you lose your roots."

Miramontes' former job as principal planner in Riverside required her to supervise senior and junior planners and planning technicians and process a wide variety of projects, including Environmental Impact Reports, Specific Plans, Design Review plans, General Plan administration and Code Amendments.

She appeared regularly to make presentations to the Riverside City Council, Planning Commission, Cultural Heritage Board and before citizen committees.

She also worked with developers, the business community and public to provide information and work toward solutions on land use matters and development.

Among the projects Miramontes supervised in Riverside were Environmental Impact Report for CORAC Business/Industrial Center, a 662,018-square-foot industrial business center for warehousing/distribution and office uses on an 80-acre vacant lot adjacent to the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park. That required Miramontes' team to resolve biological, archeological, traffic and air quality issues.

Other major developments included the Citrus Business Park Specific Plan, which required oversight to re-designate a 49-acre site from an industrial area previously dominated by a single user (Fleetwood Enterprises) to a multi-tenant and multi-owner industrial business park; the Environmental Impact Report for the Chinatown Historical Site to develop a three-story medical office building on a 4.2-acre archeological site known as the former Riverside Chinatown, a City historic landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The project became controversial and required the organization with local community groups, such as the Riverside Chinese Culture Preservation Committee, in order to organize an archeological dig and to integrate several historical interpretive elements into the proposed site plan.

Miramontes worked in Riverside since 1999, coming through the ranks of the Community Development Department, first as an Associate Planner and then as a Senior Planner. She was Principal Planner since May 2008.

Previously she worked in the City of Bellflower.

Miramontes obtained a Bachelor's of Science Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Cal Poly Pomona and received her Master's Degree in Public Administration from California State University in Long Beach.

She and her husband are kept busy raising their two daughters. Miramontes says she spends weekends chaperoning the girls to ballet and piano practices and manages to volunteer at their schools when she can find the time.



New Perris Planning Manager Clara Miramontes chats with Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Michael McDermott at Tuesday's Perris City Council meeting.